



# Environmentalism

## An Islamic Perspective

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## An Islamic Perspective

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## Introduction

### *In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy*

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and may His peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, the Messenger of Truth who was sent to the entire creation. He is the cloud of mercy, the truthful, the luminous, the winner in the race of God's elite, the seal of the prophets, the prophet of guidance, whose heart was purified, whose sins were all forgiven, by whom the divine revelation was sealed, the greatest being to ever grace God's green earth. He is a man who if the sun were to given even a fraction of his perfection, it would never stop shining, and if parents possessed even a portion of his heart's mercy, they would verily melt from compassion. And may God's peace and blessings be upon his family and companions.

In this essay, the term "environment" will not refer solely to the popular definition of the term (i.e., the living organisms and natural phenomena which are all around us), but shall also refer to humans. There is no logical reason to exclude humans, since they are not only a part of the environment, but indeed the most important component. The environment's well-being depends on mankind's spiritual well-being, while environmental degradation is the direct consequence of our failure to properly cultivate our spiritual, intellectual, and physical sides.

God has given us a heavy trust: to fulfill our mission as His deputies here on earth. This entails, first and foremost, taking care of humanity, and secondly, taking care of God's other creatures. This can only be accomplished by trying to understand God's design for creation and developing a proper



worldview.

In the Islamic worldview, acting as God's deputies on earth means that we bear the responsibility of both conserving the environment and developing it, since God has subjugated the world to serve us and make us content.

What subjugation means here is that mankind has the right to enjoy the blessings of the earth and its resources. However, keeping in mind the Islamic worldview, we have no right to benefit from these blessings by exploiting others or future generations.

God has appointed and commanded mankind to act as His deputies and guardians over these universal rights (of which all humans should enjoy). We stand as masters over the environment, accountable to no one in this temporary life. However, in the Hereafter, we will be held accountable by God and rewarded or punished accordingly. If we take good care of the environment, we will be rewarded with goodness, but if we abuse the environment and leave it to ruin, we will meet a frightful end.

The Islamic worldview of how to ecologically develop the world can be articulated on two different levels. The first is the **weltanschauung** (worldview) which describes how the relationship between man, the world, and God should be. The second is the legal framework that regulates the relationship between man and his environment on the one hand, and man and his Creator on the other.

This essay will delve into the Islamic rulings on how to work with others to maintain our shared environment. This essay will also argue that, since

Islam calls on us to uncover the secrets of the universe, we should not seek to merely preserve the environment, but actively develop and build upon it.

The Islamic worldview teaches us to look on the earth, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects with compassion. The hearts of Muslims, filled with love of God, should brim with love for everything that He has created.

This essay further lays out the binary relationships which define our world, such as the relationship between our right to mold our environment and our obligation as God's deputies to take care of it, or between the theoretical paradigm we should follow and how we should apply it practically, between conserving the environment and showing compassion towards nature, and between taking advantage of nature's blessings and enjoying her beauty.

## Environmentalism

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### *1. Humankind's mission as God's deputies and the disposal of the world at their service*

Our mission as God's deputies means that we are charged with the responsibility to care for and maintain the world. On the other hand, the fact that God has placed the world at our disposal means that we can take advantage of what it has to offer us; in both cases, we need to collaborate with our fellow humans. And just as this responsibility applies to all of us, so too does our humanity entitle us to the inalienable right to enjoy nature's blessings. According to the Islamic worldview, God has not preserved this right for one group of people to the exclusion of all others, in contrast to Jewish belief which claims that the world was created for their sake, and placed solely at their disposal – not only the animals, plants, and earth, but the rest of humanity as well. Is it any wonder, then, that they are convinced that they are the beloved children of God and that no matter how much they defy the dictates of the divine way, that God will still favor them above all others? The Islamic position stands in complete opposition to this; the true believers are those with the conviction that they are nothing more than the slaves of God, along with the rest of humanity, jinn, animals, and inanimate objects. God has entrusted them with the world; they are not supposed to appropriate it for their own purposes to the exclusion of others, nor abuse their control over it. God has established the right of *all* living beings to enjoy nature; we have no authority to deprive animals of their rights.

God has created us alone, as we are unable to produce even our own livelihood from scratch. Instead, God has put the earth, sky, sun, and clouds at our disposal to provide fresh water, clean air, and sumptuous food for us.



God did not want us to be forced to turn to Him out of hunger or want, but rather wanted us to voluntarily choose faith, and arrive at certainty in Him by reflecting on His creative powers.

## *2. Rights and Duties*

All people share the universal right to enjoy God's gift of sustenance. On the other hand, we all have a duty to care for and maintain our world, in order to fulfill the trust given to us in our capacity as God's deputies.

Islamic law has sanctified our duties along with the individual and communal rights they entail, and has placed human rights within the broader and more comprehensive framework of the rights of all living beings. For instance, by obligating Muslims to practice their religious rites, Islamic law simultaneously grants them the right to freely practice their faith. For their part, Muslims have an obligation to not only demand their rights, but to fight for the rights of everyone else as well. In other words, Muslims should push their societies, whether Muslim or not, to ensure freedom of belief for all.

Similarly, when Islamic law enjoins on Muslims to honor the dignity of other people, it in turn is granting them the right to have their dignity safeguarded; to this end, Islamic law expects society to expend all of its resources to ensure this right. The same applies for people's wealth, which society must protect.

In a similar vein, Islamic law does not allow us to misuse our body, but obligates us to dignify it by keeping it healthy and clean. Islamic law also mandates that we use our body to engage in labor so that we are not forced to lower ourselves by begging.



Islam is distinguished from other religions and ideologies in its quest to eliminate the causes of poverty. To this end, Islam calls upon its adherents to persistently and diligently work toward developing individual and communal capacity in order to conserve the environment and maximize what it can provide to us and all other living beings.

Islamic law addresses the relationship between humans and the environment with the same binary view of rights and duties. Just as it has obligated us to conserve the environment and share it with others, it has also granted each of us the right to reside in a clean and beautiful area, where we can live in freedom and dignity.

Throughout the history of Muslim societies, belief in the Reckoning of the Hereafter played a major role in pushing people to the loftiest standards in their work. The level of civilization which Islamic society achieved in this regard was nothing short of astounding.

For instance, belief in the Reckoning of the Hereafter prompted bakers “to cover their mouths with cloth, because if they spoke or sneezed, spittle or mucous might drip into the dough. Similarly, bakers would tie a white band around their forehead to prevent sweat from dripping down. Lastly, they would shave their arms to prevent hair from becoming mixed in. And if they worked during the day, they would have someone stand by them to swat any flies.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, this mindset placed stringent conditions on the practice of medicine, regulating what type of person could engage in it. "A doctor should be knowledgeable of the body's composition, how its organs function, and the diseases which afflict it along with their causes and symptoms, the drugs which could aid it, what to do if such drugs are unavailable, how to concoct them, and how to administer them in the appropriate dosage so that the potency of the drugs neutralizes the potency of the disease.

"Those who do not possess these qualifications may under no circumstances administer to the sick, or engage in risky treatments, or undertake anything of which they are not firmly knowledgeable."<sup>2</sup>

Islamic law has comprehensively addressed the issue of environmental conservation with several legal rulings which tie the development of the world to the general framework of religion. Furthermore, Islamic law always seeks to promote the well-being of both the individual and the community, while aiming to place the minimum burden on them.

To this end, Islamic law stipulates certain punishments for certain crimes and imposes the obligation to struggle (*jihad*) against those who commit aggression and spread corruption – as manifested in inequity, killing, wreaking destruction, and contemptuous disbelief. The ultimate aim of all this is to ecologically develop the earth, suppress the spread of corruption in it, and prevent its living creatures from being pointlessly harmed.

### *3. Following a Proper Worldview and Implementing it*

Islamic law has placed on us a worldly as well as religious obligation to develop the world and all that is in it. On the other hand, there is no specific approach we are required to adopt; it is up to us to use our independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) to promote our own well-being. Islamic law nevertheless provides us with a general worldview and delineates what our objectives should be. This ensures that our actions do not disrupt the balance carefully ordained between the different elements of nature.

Humankind's responsibility to develop the world can be divided into two components: following a proper paradigm and implementing this paradigm on the ground. Neglecting any of these two will lead to the spread of corruption; neglecting the process of developing nature would be a derelict of our duty as God's deputies, just as neglecting to adapt an ethically-based paradigm would make it impossible to build a civilization which can provide its members with true fulfillment.

Because the materialists have focused on the process of development to the expense of an ethically-based paradigm, their progress has been lopsided. They have failed to provide people with psychological and spiritual fulfillment, just as they have failed to keep nature clean and replenishable. Indeed, materialist ideology has only served to stoke people's greed, driving them to rip open the earth's bowels and extract everything they can find merely to satisfy their urge for power and control. This springs directly from the corruption of the human soul which has deviated from the path that leads to true happiness.



The excesses of materialism have desensitized us to trashing the earth with atomic, nuclear, and radioactive waste in our lust to accomplish our short-term interests. This folly has reduced much of the earth's ability to replenish and be developed.

The materialists have not only abandoned any ethically-based paradigm, they have deliberately sought to undermine it by propagating a culture of sex and violence and by promoting atheism and superstitious beliefs.

#### *4. Conversation of the Environment and Love*

Islam directs us to cultivate a relationship with the inanimate world based on compassion and a sense of shared worship. In the Islamic paradigm, the whole world praises God and bows before Him in obeisance; it loves those who follow God, and mourns their passing, while it hates those who reject God, and is unmoved their deaths. This is because the believers worship God in harmony with it, while the disbelievers are obstinately at odds with their environment.

When the Messenger of God migrated from Mecca, he spoke of his attachment to the land he grew up in, while once standing on an elevated hill overlooking Mecca: "By God, Mecca, you are the greatest of all God's green earth, and the most beloved to God. If I had not been forcibly expelled from you, I would never have left."<sup>3</sup>

The Messenger of God was filled with love for this inert piece of earth because of the lofty station it enjoyed in God's sight, due to its housing the

first temple of worship for mankind. The Prophet loved this land, even though he disliked those living in it who were ignorant, barbaric, corrupt, and closed to God's truth.

For its part, the earth loved the Prophet. For instance, there was once a tree stump which would cry out for him in longing. (We'll quote the story in full later on).

In this regard, Islam stands out from all other philosophical systems, because it provides an integrated paradigm of the world which calls upon us to use nature's resources wisely.



### *The Relationship between the Universe and the Creator:*

1. The whole universe praises God, the Majestic, as the Qur'an notes: "Do you not see that all those that are in the heavens and earth praise God, as do the birds with wings outstretched? Each knows its [own way] of prayer and glorification: God has full knowledge of what they do." [24:41]

Similarly, the Qur'an says that, "The seven heavens and the earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise." [17:44]

Since the whole universe celebrates the praises of the Lord, any misuse of it is a senseless waste and a sin which will inevitably lead to ruin. Those who are guilty of such should be treated as criminals, because a violation of the universe is nothing less than a violation of humankind's right to life.

As part of this worldview, Muslims should respect all God's creatures, big and small out of veneration for God who miraculously makes both living creatures and inanimate objects sing His praise and bow down to Him in worship.

God says in the Qur'an: "We gave sound judgment and knowledge to both [Solomon and David]. We made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises with David." [21:79]

Because the prophet David – whom God made His deputy and granted knowledge and wisdom – ruled with justice, God put the animals and the earth personally at his service. Thus, when David would sing the Lord's praises, the mountains would ring out his hymns; and if he took

a break from worship, God would have the mountains glorify Him to nudge David to become more active and zealous.

God also says, "We graced David with Our favor. We said, 'You mountains, echo God's praises together with him, and you birds, too.' And We softened iron for him." [34:10].

## **2. In the Qur'an, God often addresses other creatures:**

"And your Lord inspired the bee, saying, 'Build yourselves houses in the mountains and trees and what people construct. Then feed on all kinds of fruit and follow the ways made easy for you by your Lord.'" [16:68-69]

God has also directly given the earth and the heavens direct commandments: "Earth, swallow up your water, and sky, hold back." [11:44]

God bestowed on the heavens and the earth free will: "Then He turned to the sky, which was smoke – He said to it and the earth, 'Come into being, willingly or not,' and they said, 'We come willingly.'" [41:11]

God initially offered the divine trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, giving them free will to accept or reject it, but they declined: "We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it; humankind undertook it – they have always been inept and foolish." [33:72]

This demonstrates the physical and psychological respect afforded to all of God's creation in the Islamic worldview. True Muslims approach the heavens and the earth and all of God's creatures with respect and mercy.

### *Humankind's Relationship with the Universe*

The relationship between humankind and the universe is originally one of harmony. Ever since humankind's descent to earth, their intellectual and social development has been intimately tied to the extent to which they have acclimated to their environment, and how well they have utilized the tools of life. Humans have an obligation to respect and cultivate their environment, and under no circumstances may abuse it.

Muslims in particular should approach God's creatures with an attitude of equality and partnership in worshipping the same God. Believers exude love for what He has fashioned from the love they hold for Him. They do not differentiate between smaller creatures or more impressive ones, because what matters to them is the All-Powerful and All-Wise Creator. Muslims even venerate and adore some inanimate objects because of their lofty station in God's sight, such as the Qur'anic text, the Kaaba, and the Prophet Muhammad's grave.

The Prophet once demonstrated to his companions how to be sensitive to inanimate objects. Jabir related that, "The roof of the Prophet mosque was held up by the stumps of date palms. When the Prophet would give a sermon, he would stand next to one of the tree stumps. Later on, a pulpit was crafted for him to use, so he stopped preaching next to the tree stump. One day when the Prophet was delivering a sermon on the new pulpit, we heard the tree stump letting out a noise similar to the cry of a camel giving birth. The Prophet then went over to it and put his hand on it until it calmed down."<sup>4</sup>



The hearts of some people – even believers – are harder than that tree's because they do not long for the Prophet or cry when they are separated from him in the same way that the tree did.

2. The Prophet once passed by the Mountain of Uhud. Even though this was a place where the Muslims suffered significant casualties, where the Prophet himself was wounded, and where the Prophet's uncle Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib was martyred (an event which greatly grieved the Prophet), the Prophet nevertheless pointed toward Uhud and said, "This is a mountain which loves us and which we love in return."<sup>5</sup>

The mountain radiated love for the Muslims, and they returned this affection, even though the Muslims had every right to view it as a bad omen because of what had transpired there.

Thus, inanimate objects are accorded their measure of respect in the Islamic worldview. Many acts of worship are inextricably tied up to specific physical localities, the greatest example of this being the ritual of circumambulating the Kaaba. This ritual is very much reminiscent of how the heavenly bodies glide in their orbits, as well as of how electrons move along in their orbit around the atomic nucleus. This symbolizes the structural unity between the greatest of God's creation and the most minute, and speaks to how God is the creator of everything, and how the universe is nothing more than a vast mosque where all of creation joins together in bowing down and celebrating the praise of their Lord.

Humankind and all other creatures are subject to the same law which regulates their movements. Every single thing in the universe has a life cycle

than spins from inception to growth to decay to death – whether inanimate objects, animals, or humans. Even galaxies have an expiration date, after which they break apart and become part of the life cycle of other objects, losing their original form and transforming into various other manifestations of creation.

God says, “Have you not considered that God sends water down from the sky, guides it along to form springs in the earth, and then, with it, brings forth vegetation of various colors, which later withers, turns yellow before your eyes, and is crumbled to dust at His command? There is truly a reminder in this for those who have understanding.” [39:21]

God also says, “It is God who creates you weak, then gives you strength, then weakness after strength, together with your gray hair: He creates what He wills; He is the All Knowing, the All Powerful.” [30:54].

All facets of creation experience similar stages of weakness and strength, deficiency and perfection. Every part of creation has a predestined lifespan which will not end one second early or late, at which point its role in the universe will be terminate.

Conversely, all things in creation multiply in a similar fashion. God has created everything in pairs which are attracted to each other and which produce energy or life when conjoined. All of life is a sign of God’s oneness, as clear as day, shining on the face of all creatures, both big and small.

As the Qur’an says, “And We created all things in pairs, so that you [people] might take note.” [51:49]



## *The Universe Standing at the Disposal of Humankind*

Islam liberated humankind from fearing and worshipping objects, teaching humans to approach the world with authority and mastery, and to not give up any opportunity to take advantage of what God has put at their disposal.

Belief in the divinity of nature or the divinity of one of God's creatures is extremely dangerous for understanding how we should relate to the world around us. Such depraved heresies undermine our God-given value, freedom, and dignity, dragging us down from the lofty station God raised us to as His deputies. These beliefs put us at the disposal of the world, instead of vice-versa, making us subservient to nature which was created for our sake.

Humans are part of the world, but they are distinguished from everything else by their special relationship with the Creator. Humans have been charged with the divine trust which was too much for the heavens, the earth, and the mountains to bear. Instead of accepting this awesome responsibility, everything else in creation deigned to be made subservient to humankind who would be held to account for their mission.

Humans are further distinguished from the rest of creation because they have been created with the ability to intellectually comprehend the cosmos. It is this ability to capture the measurements and dynamics of the outside world in their inner minds which makes humankind fit for the task at hand.

Humans were bestowed with these capabilities in order to make full use of the world which has been put at their disposal – not to arrogantly control

the world with a sense of absolute lordship. We are supposed to utilize these talents to discern God's laws imprinted in the universe.

Nevertheless, it is not our innate talents which have granted us mastery over the world, as demonstrated by the fact that even a creature as puny as a fly can breach our defenses and snatch something away from us without our being able to take it back. "People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those who you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly, and if a fly took something away from them, they would not be able to retrieve it. How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!" [22:73]

Similarly, even the most physically-weak humans (children) and the most mentally-weak (the clinically-insane) are still able to control large beasts of burden, even though they do not have the physical or mental power to impose their will.

Furthermore, nature sometimes reacts to humans without any intention on their part. For instance, if you're walking down a path, you could be cultivating the food chain without even knowing it if your foot pushes a seed into the earth, which then grows into a tree, which then feeds an animal, which is then hunted and consumed by a human. To conclude, the world was put at our fingertips only by the will of God, not by our own powers.

Nature is also able to respond to itself and preserve its own strength, vigor, and health, by the will of God. Only recently, in the long history of the world, has man discovered lands that had otherwise been untouched by man, where the nature was blessed with resources, life, and beauty that left man



amazed and in awe.

Another sign which points to a First Cause and a greater Creator, is how God embedded in the earth the very means to conserve its natural wealth millions of years before humans knew anything about them.

History and experience provide many examples where humans have bent the laws of nature, falsely thinking they have mastered all its secrets. Nevertheless, the true believers know that behind all of this is the One God, and that only He has any true power over anything.

The Qur'an discusses the tyrants of old who thought that their power was absolute. "Pharaoh proclaimed to his people, 'My people, is the Kingdom of Egypt not mine? And these rivers that flow at my feet, are they not mine? Do you not see?'" [43:51]

Pharaoh thought that his claim to this corner of the earth gave him the right to enslave his subjects. As a result, he did everything in his power to force them into bondage, never for a moment believing that Moses and the Israelites could escape his grasp.

"Pharaoh made himself high and mighty in the land and divided the people into different groups: one group he oppressed, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women – he was one of those who spread corruption – but We wished to favor those who were oppressed in that land, to make them leaders, and the inheritors, to establish them in the land, and through them show Pharaoh, Haman, and their armies the very thing they feared." [28:4-6]

Simple arithmetic indicated that Pharaoh had the upper hand. He had imposed his will on his country, become arrogant, and lorded over his people until they worshipped him. Under these circumstances, how could Moses and his followers possibly escape Pharaoh's grasp, much less become – as God promised – princes and kings (“We wished to...make them leaders”) or to inherit Pharaoh's kingdom (“We wished to...make them...the inheritors”) and then that God would “...establish them in the land”? This only came to pass because God's will intervened, overturning the balance of power, and bending the laws of nature in order to grant victory to those who adhered to the truth.

### *The Relationship Between Humankind and the Earth:*

Islam more than any other religion calls on us to have an intimate connection with the earth, ecologically develop it, and ponder its wonders. There are three levels to this: The most basic level relates to the physical dimension, whereby the earth lies at our disposal for our physical benefit. Next, on the intellectual level, the earth's wonders allow us to ponder God's creative abilities. And the highest level is the spiritual one, where Muslims and the earth connect in love and affection.

God says in the Qur'an: “Have you ever wondered...how God made you spread forth from the earth like a plant, how He will return you into it and then bring you out again, and how He has spread the earth out for you to walk along its spacious paths?” [71:17-20]

We long for the earth like a child longs for its mother, since we were created from her, eat and drink our fill from her, and ultimately will be buried in her bosom.

God also says, "From the earth We created you, into it We shall return you, and from it We shall raise you a second time." [20:55]

The Prophet once said, "Preserve and take care of the earth, for she is your mother."<sup>6</sup>

Sufyan narrated from 'A'isha that, when someone would complain to the Prophet about a wound or an ailment, the Prophet would do this with his finger (at which point Sufyan placed his index finger into the ground and then raised it) and say, "In the name of God, may the soil of our land mixed with some of our spittle cure those of us who are ill, by the leave of our Lord."<sup>7</sup>

Imam al-Nawawi noted that the opinion of the majority of scholars is that "our land" (*arduna*) refers here to the earth as a whole, i.e., "our earth" or "the earth". There is a weaker opinion that it refers specifically to Medina, because of the latter's blessed status. Also, "spittle" refers to only a small amount of saliva. The import of this hadith is that the Prophet wetted his index finger with his spittle and then placed it in the ground so that some of the soil would stick to it. He would then wipe his hand over the part of the person's body where they had been injured or that had become ill, while reciting this invocation. And God knows best.

Al-Baydawi once said, "Medical research has demonstrated that saliva facilitates bodily growth and maintain a balanced temperament, and that the soil of one's homeland helps sustain a good frame of mind and prevent illness. Accordingly, medical experts advise travelers to bring some soil, if not water,



from their homeland with them so that they may mix it with the foreign water in their waterskins to avoid contracting any illness.”<sup>8</sup>

There is an emotional tie between us and the land we grow up in. Not only is there nothing wrong with that, Islamic law in fact has explicitly encouraged this bond. Those who are in tune with their inner nature always long for their homeland, and never feel as at home as in their own country.

Although the Qur’an depicts the primordial relationship between humankind and the heavens and the earth as one of love and companionship, this relationship will be severed if we act iniquitously and reject the truth, as indicated in the Qur’an with the destruction of Pharaoh and his people: “Neither heavens nor earth shed a tear for them, nor were they given any time.” [44:29]

This is an example of how the earth can emotionally react to us. Al-Tabari expounded on this verse further, quoting Sa’id bin Jubayr that, “A man once approached Ibn ‘Abbas: ‘Father of ‘Abbas, I had a question about the verse “Neither heavens nor earth shed a tear for them, nor were they given any time.” Do the heavens and the earth actually cry for anybody?’ ‘Indeed,’ Ibn ‘Abbas replied, ‘There is a gate in the heavens for every single creature; their sustenance descends from it, while their deeds rise up to it. When a believer passes away, their gate becomes locked, and tears pour forth for them. Similarly, if the believers can no longer pray and remember God on a certain piece of the earth they used to take as a place of worship, the earth cries for them. But since Pharaoh’s people did not leave any trace of righteous works on the earth, nor did any good rise up from them to the heavens, neither the heavens nor the earth shed a tear for them.’”

### *Having Mercy and Gentleness with All of God's Creation*

God says in the Qur'an, "It was only as a mercy that We sent you [Prophet] for all creatures." [21:107]

The Messenger of God was a mercy to all of creation, to mankind and jinn, to animals and plants, and even to inanimate objects. He was the most merciful in guiding people to true knowledge, knowledge of the Creator and His creation, knowledge of the straight path to properly worship God and practice mercy toward His creation, and knowledge of how to take advantage of the blessings nature has to offer us.

1. Anas narrated that the Messenger of God once said, "I swear by the One in Whose hand lays my soul, God only bestows His mercy on those who are merciful." We responded, "But, Messenger of God, we all practice mercy already." "I don't mean those who are merciful merely to themselves, but to people in general."<sup>9</sup>
2. The Prophet encouraged his followers to be merciful with every creature: "Those who practice mercy will be shown mercy by the Lord of mercy. Show mercy to those on earth so that the One in Heaven may show mercy to you."<sup>10</sup>

Al-Tayyibi said, "Showing mercy to God's creation demonstrates a soft heart, and a soft heart is a sign of faith. Therefore those who do not possess a soft heart are devoid of faith, and those who are devoid of faith are wretched. Thus, those who do not foster a soft heart are wretched."

The expression in the hadith mentioned, "Those on earth". encompasses *all* of God's creatures, the pious and the wicked, those who speak and those who are silent, wild beasts and birds.<sup>11</sup>

Ibn Battal al-Maghribi (d. 449 A.H.) commented that, "This hadith exhorts us to practice mercy and be gentle towards all of creation, including both believers and those who reject faith, and both tamed and wild animals. By performing good deeds, God will forgive your mistakes and erase your sins. Every sensible believer should seek their share of mercy, and practice it with their fellow humans as well as with animals, for God has not created us in vain. Amongst the ways to practice mercy towards animals are to feed them, provide them with water, not overburden them with carrying heavy loads, and refrain from beating them."<sup>12</sup>

Al-'Arif al-Buni once noted, "If you long for God's mercy, be merciful to yourself and others. Don't hoard up your blessings; be merciful by helping the ignorant with your knowledge, the lowly with your strength, the poor with your wealth, the young and the elderly with your compassion, animals with your sympathy, and sinners by calling them to God's way. Those nearest to God's mercy are those who are most merciful to His creation, especially since all the good we do emanates from the divine attribute of mercy."<sup>13</sup>

3. The Prophet said, "Show mercy so that you may be shown mercy. Forgive others so that you may be forgiven. Woe to those who are like funnels, devoid of the divine guidance (*aqma' al-qawl*), and woe to those who deliberately persist in sin."<sup>14</sup>



“Show mercy so that you may be shown mercy”: mercy is one of the divine attributes which God encompasses His servants with; this attribute can be found in names such as ‘Abdurrahman (servant of the Lord of Mercy) and ‘Abdurrahim (servant of the Giver of Mercy). Consequently, Islamic law encourages mercy in everything, even when fighting one’s enemies amongst those who reject the truth, sacrificing animals, and bringing forth evidence against someone in the court of law. “Forgive others so that you in turn may be forgiven”: God loves His divine attributes, and similarly loves those of His creation who are imbued with them. “Woe unto those who are like funnels emptied of the divine guidance (*aqma’ al-qawl*)”: those who are oblivious to God’s law and do not strive to imbue themselves with its ethics will face utter ruin. The word *aqma’* is the plural of *qima’* which refers to a funnel. In other words, the Prophet is likening those who hear God’s word but do not act upon them to funnels which have been completely emptied of their contents.<sup>15</sup>

4. The Prophet commanded his followers to exude gentleness in every situation, to the point where Muslims should not even slam the door behind them. As he once said, “Whenever gentleness imbues something, it never fails to beautify it, and whenever it is torn away from something, its absence never fails to disfigure it.”<sup>16</sup>

The all-encompassing mercy which the Prophet enjoined upon the believers is broader and more inclusive than the issue of environmentalism which is addressed by all religions and philosophies.

### *The Concept of Our Mission as God's Deputies in the Islam*

Our charge as God's deputies on earth entails the obligation to ecologically develop the earth's resources and undo whatever damage may be inflicted on it.

1. The Qur'an says, "[Prophet], when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am putting a deputy on earth,' they said, 'How can You put someone there who will spread corruption and cause bloodshed?''" [2:30]
2. "David, We have made you a deputy on earth. Judge fairly between people. Do not follow your false desires, lest they divert you from God's path." [38:26]

Notice in the first verse how protective the angels are toward the earth – since it is one of God's creatures – and how they are gripped by the fear that humans will ruin and corrupt it. "How can You put someone there who will spread corruption?" Ruining and corrupting the earth relate to the dimensions of time and space, whereas "and cause bloodshed" relates to other humans. In other words, the angels were also concerned about what would happen to the human race – not just the earth – because they are also God's creation, deserving of mercy and care.

The structural unity of the text is manifested through the dual relationship between humankind and the earth: "When [this type of sinner] leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the earth, destroying crops and offspring



– God does not like corruption.” [2:205]; “to spread corruption on earth” again, referring to the earth; “destroying crops and offspring” referring to the destruction of human life, both indirectly, through the destruction of their food source, and directly, by the killing of their children.

The angels knew that Adam would be endowed with free will, unlike the rest of creation. Those who possess free will have the ability to go against the divine order, in contrast to other creatures who simply receive God’s commands and carry them out, and know only what God directly informs them of. The angels saw the jumble of emotions and desires which were to constitute the human being, and concluded that humans would unavoidably be driven to foment chaos and violent conflict in their insatiable quest for domination and control.

Nevertheless, when God explained the aspects of Adam which had been hidden from the angels – namely, his ability to learn new information, recall it, and analyze it – the angels “said, ‘May You be glorified! We have no knowledge except that which You have taught us.’” [2:32]

What we can deduce from this is that the well-being of the environment is intimately tied to humans’ actions; if they are overcome by their desires and neglect their heart and mind, they will destroy both themselves and their surroundings. Conversely, if they seek out knowledge and wisdom, they will be in harmony with the order of the universe, and their actions will help to creatively develop the earth.

The second verse under discussion ties together the ideas of humanity’s mission as God’s deputies, the earth, and fairness (*haqq*). The word “*haqq*” is



an attribute of God, meaning the Truth, or the Reality. “*Haqq*” can also refer to the “true purpose” which the world has been founded on, for God never creates anything in vain or for His own self-amusement.

As God says in the Qur’an, “We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them playfully. If We had wished for a pastime, We could have found it within Us – *if* We had wished for any such thing. No! We hurl the truth (al-haqq) against falsehood, and truth obliterates it – see how falsehood vanishes away! Woe to you [people] for the way you describe God!” [21:16-18]

“Did you think that We had created you in vain, and that you would not be brought back to Us? Exalted be God, the true (haqq) King, there is no god but Him, the Lord of the Glorious Throne!” [23:115-116]

When God made David His deputy on earth, He told him to rule with fairness (*haqq*). The word “*haqq*” is a synonym for justice and righteousness, and is the opposite of vanity, pointless amusement, and corruption. The kingship David was granted in his capacity as God’s deputy was to be founded on the establishment of equity and justice (*haqq*), which is why God proceeded to say to David, “and do not follow your false desires”. It was these false desires which the angels first discerned in Adam, which is what led them to conclude that he would spread corruption and bloodshed on earth. The “*haqq*” (justice/fairness/truth) manifested in the knowledge and rational mind bestowed on Adam was initially hidden from the angels.

God enjoined on the Prophet Muhammad to rule with justice and fairness, because this is the path to God's love: "If you [Prophet] do judge between them, **judge justly**: God **loves** the just." [5:42]

Humankind's mastery over the world is only by proxy, and is not absolute. According to the Islamic concept of humankind's mission as God's deputies, humans are charged with conserving and taking care of their environment.

Mankind is responsible for the trust which has been handed over to them; they have an obligation to do their utmost and apply perfection in their work to properly fulfill their mission, and will be held accountable if they mess up. "[It is He] who has created death and life, so that He may test which of you best in deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving;" [67:2]

In the same sura, God further expounds on the idea of applying beauty and perfection in one's work: "It is He who has made **the earth** manageable for you – **travel** its regions; **eat** its provision – and to Him you will be resurrected."

God has put the earth at humankind's disposal and made it manageable for them so that they may take advantage of its blessings. In turn, humans must work hard to reap the earth's benefits and keep it in good order.

Reports from the Prophetic tradition reaffirm the importance of work, and emphasize how the divine way bestows on us resolve, strength, and dignity by guiding us to noble work. "Anas bin Malik narrated that a man from the Ansar approached the Prophet, asking for charity. The Prophet in turn asked him, 'Don't you have anything in your home?' 'Yes, actually, I



have some cloth I use for clothing and as carpeting, and I also have a cup I drink water from.' 'Bring them to me,' the Prophet ordered. When the man came back with his belongings, the Prophet took them in hand and said to those around him, 'Who will buy these two items?' Someone replied, 'I'll take them for a dirham.' 'Won't anybody offer more than that?' The Prophet reiterated his question two or three times until someone said, 'I'll take them for two dirhams.' The Prophet handed over the two items to the buyer, took the two dirhams, and gave them to the man, telling him, 'Use one dirham to buy some food for your family, and the other to buy a hatchet. After you do that, come back with the hatchet.' Later on, the man came back with the head of a hatchet. The Prophet grabbed it and fastened it to a piece of wood to act as the handle. 'Go and collect wood to sell, and don't come back for fifteen more days.' So the man set out to collect wood, which he then sold. By the end of the fifteen days, he had earned ten dirhams, which he used to purchase clothing and food. The Messenger of God said to him, 'Doing this is better than coming on the Day of Judgment with the mark of begging on your face. There are only three types of people who should beg: the dirt poor, those who have suffered a terrible loss, and those who need to pay the blood money for manslaughter.'"<sup>17</sup>

Abu Hurayra reported that, "The Messenger of God passed by a pile of food, and stuck his hand in it. His fingers felt something damp. 'Excuse me sir, What is this?' he asked. 'Messenger of God, the rain got to it.' The Prophet responded, 'In that case, why didn't you put it on top of the rest of the food so that everyone could clearly see it? I will have absolutely nothing to do with those guilty of fraud.'"<sup>18</sup>



Islam calls on us to engage in dignified work and to work hard to cultivate our world and keep it in good order. God and His Messenger will see your work, and you will be rewarded accordingly. But your work *must* be carried out with honor, and not fraud or deceit. Honor should be our guiding principle, and our labor should be the practical application of our code of honor. On the other hand, if your work is devoid of honor and honesty, it will only be counter-productive.

Fraud and deceit undermine both social tranquility and economic activity, because they foster suspicion between buyers and sellers, disrupting people's inner peace by spreading anxiety and fear. These are the manifestations of corruption in society.

### *Islam Encourages Contemplation of the Universe*

Islam promotes ecological awareness by calling on us to explore nature's secrets and take care of its beauty. The universe's harmoniously orchestrated movement is a clear indication of the greatness of its Creator, but only the contemplative one knows how to ponder over these signs. This is why those endowed with sure knowledge possess the firmest conviction of the existence and unity of God, the Real.

Muslims seek their knowledge of reality by studying both divine revelation and the world around them. Only by profoundly contemplating both may Muslims achieve true certainty. They should expend their utmost effort in reflection in order to arrive at true knowledge, and act upon what they have learned about the social and physical laws God has established in the world, in order to find contentment in both this life and the next.

Both the universe and revelation are God's creations through which He speaks to our mind and our senses. Nevertheless, revelation directly and unambiguously addresses us, laying forth the straight path for how to interact with the world in such a way that we can benefit from and enjoy what it has to offer us.

Contemplation of the universe and divine revelation is not only an obligation, it is indeed one of the fundamental commandments of this religion. Contemplation is a direct path by which God's servants can reach Him. Conversely, since contemplation guides people to true knowledge – which is the very foundation of Islam – Islamic society should guarantee this right to every individual. At the same time, it is equally incumbent upon Islamic society to ensure that competent thinkers are enabled to carry out research, and are guaranteed the freedom to publish the conclusions they reach either directly or indirectly, without fear – provided, of course, they follow a rational methodology. This applies equally to research on inanimate objects, plants, or humans; theoretical or practical matters; or on earthly or heavenly matters. The Islamic state furthermore has the responsibility to facilitate the means which enable these researchers to produce high-quality publications. If Muslims, both as individuals and as a community, appreciated the need to attend to this duty, their sciences would advance, their knowledge would significantly increase, and their countries would become the model of a truly integrated civilization.



*1. Revelation calls on Muslims to reflect on the beauty of creation and the perfection of its artistry.*

“[It is God] who created the seven heavens, one above the other. You will not see any flaw in what the Lord of Mercy creates. Look again! Can you see any flaw? Look again! And again! Your sight will turn back to you, weak and defeated. We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps...” [67:3-5]

“[It is God] who gave everything its perfect form.” [32:7]

“We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything?” [41:53]

“In the creation of the heavens and earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the seas with goods for people; in the water which God sends down from the sky to give life to the earth when it has been barren, scattering all kinds of creatures over it; in the changing of the winds and clouds that run their appointed courses between the sky and earth: there are signs in all these for those who use their minds.” [2:164]

Notice how the last verse ends with “there are signs in all these for those who use their minds.” This means that only those who are rationally objective and use their minds to tame their desires will heed this clear call and thereby arrive at faith in the Creator and an understanding of the social and physical laws He has established to govern creation. Only these will be guided to the truth upon which all of existence has been founded.



Also note how this verse refers to the three primary elements which constitute the universe: space (“the heavens and earth”), time (“the alternation of night and day”), and water.

2. Some of the worship rituals in Islam are based on reflecting on and glorifying the creative genius of the universe, such as the prayers for the lunar and solar eclipses, as well as the rain prayer.

The Messenger of God said, “Neither the sun nor the moon eclipse because of anyone’s death. Rather, they are two of God’s signs in the universe. If you see either of them, stand up for prayer.”<sup>19</sup>

### *Contemplation Inevitably Leads Us to Belief in the Existence and Unity of the Creator*

“What your Lord has sent down to you [Prophet] is the truth (*al-haqq*), yet most people do not believe. It is God who raised up the heavens with no visible supports and then established Himself on the throne; He has subjected the sun and the moon each to pursue its course for an appointed time; He regulates all things, and makes the revelations clear so that you may be certain of meeting your Lord; it is He who spread out the earth, placed firm mountains and rivers on it, and made two of every kind of fruit; He draws the veil of night over the day. There truly are signs in this for people who reflect. There are, in the land, neighboring plots, gardens of vineyards, cornfields, palm trees in clusters or otherwise, all watered with the same water, yet We make some of them taste better than others: there truly are signs in this for people who reason.” [13:1-4]

These signs reveal an All-Wise Power orchestrating the order of things. This Power has decreed that fruits of various flavors should spring forth from the same soil planted with the same type of seed and fed with the same type of water.

It should be noted how these verses, which address the creation of the heavens and the earth, start out by discussing the truth (*al-haqq*) which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, i.e., the divine way which commands that nature be conserved and kept in good order. "What your Lord has sent down to you [Prophet] is the truth (*al-haqq*)" The passage then continues on to detail God's wisdom and unique power to create.

The following verses address the divine will in the universe and how God would never leave anything to chance, leave nature alone to run her own affairs:

***1. "Who created a barrier between the fresh and salt water? Is it another god beside God?" [27:61]***

"It is He who released the two bodies of flowing water, one sweet and fresh and the other salty and bitter, and put an insurmountable barrier between them." [25:53]

"He released the two bodies of [fresh and salt] water. They meet, yet there is a barrier between them they do not cross." [55:19-20]

The provenance of both bodies of water is the sky, just as both are made of water. So glory be to God who granted each a particular portion of the

earth's surface, such that neither encroaches upon the other. Both are equally vital for our survival, and if either spilled into the other, it would unleash terrible havoc.

## *2. Verses which call on us to reflect on the sources of our food*

“One of you go to the city with your silver coins, find out (*fal-yanzur*; or: “contemplate”) where the best food is there, and bring some back.” [18:19]

“[F]ind out (*fal-yanzur*)”: i.e., look for pure, wholesome food. In other words, we are encouraged to be very selective about what we eat. If Muslims would settle for only the best, they would accept only the best products from growers who really took care of the earth and cultivated it with skill.

“Let humans consider (*fal-yanzur*; or: “contemplate”) the food they eat! We pour down abundant water and cause the soil to split open. We make grain grow, and vines, fresh vegetation, olive trees, date palms, luscious gardens, fruits and fodder: all **for you and your livestock** to enjoy.” [80:24-32]

The first verse contemplates the benefits of food and how it has been put at our disposal. The second verse uses contemplation to discern God's true power and how to thereby be guided to sound knowledge. The first verse encourages the application of beauty and perfection in one's work, while the second verse emphasizes the necessity of faith in the Creator who cultivated this multitude of blessings.



2. Verses which call on us to reflect on the creation of animals and how they have been put at our disposal

“In livestock, too, you have a lesson – We give you a drink from the contents of their bellies, between waste matter and blood, pure milk, sweet to the drinker.” [16:66]

Humans can only begin to appreciate God’s power by reflecting on His dominion. This verse points to God’s ability to extract something good and pure from its very opposite. He enlightens us with these signs to show us that only by extracting what is good and pure from the very heart of corruption can we properly develop our world and fulfill our trust.

3. Verses which call on us to contemplate the winds as the initial factor in the cycle of life

“We send the winds to fertilize, and We bring down water from the sky for you to drink – you do not control its sources.” [15:22]

This verse alludes to the wind’s role in the life cycle. The wind helps facilitate the pollinization of plants by the command of the One who sent it. The wind does not act on its own accord, but only in accordance with God’s will. The proof for this is that the wind may cause destruction upon one community, while raining blessings and fertile seeds on another. The wind is completely subjected to God’s will, and does not bring harm or benefit out of its own desire.

“It is God who sends forth the winds; they raise up the clouds; We drive them to a dead land and with them revive the earth after its death: such will be the Resurrection.” [35:9]

The wind commences the first stage in the cycle of nature. This verse begins with the sacred name of the divine in order to emphasize that God alone sends the wind to drive the clouds to revive the earth.

5. Verses which call on us to reflect on the beauty of the universe and then to strive to preserve the environment's beauty and blessings:

“You sometimes see the earth lifeless, yet when We send down water it stirs and swells and produces every kind of joyous growth: this is because God is the truth (al-haqq).” [22:5-6]

We see from this that there is an intimate connection between beauty and truth (*al-haqq*). Truth and justice (*haqq*) demand that we preserve the world and its beauty.

“We sent down water from the sky, with which We made every kind of good plant grow on earth.” [31:10]

“Who sends down water from the sky for you – with which We cause gardens of delight to grow: you have no power to make the trees grow in them – is it another god beside God? No! But they are people who take others to be equal with God... Who makes you His deputies in the earth?” [27:60,62]

God has made us His deputies on earth so that we may preserve and

develop nature's beauty. If we understand this properly, we should be driven to be creative in everything we do.

“[3] He created the heavens and the earth for a true purpose (al-haqq), and He is far above whatever they join with Him! [4] He created humans from a drop of fluid, and yet humans openly challenge Him. [5] And livestock – He created them too. You derive warmth and other benefits from them: you get food from them; [6] you find beauty in them when you bring them home to rest and when you drive them out to pasture. [7] They carry your loads to lands you yourselves could not reach without great hardship – truly your Lord is kind and merciful – [8] horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and use for show, and other things you know nothing about.” [16:3-8]

The verses first refer to the true purpose (*haqq*) for which the heavens and the earth were created, and how humans were created from a drop of fluid. The passage then differentiates between those things in life which are essential and those which are more aesthetic, that is, those things which directly benefit us, and those which beautify and adorn us.

The fifth verse of this passage discusses the warmth, food, and other benefits provided by livestock. The sixth verse mentions the delight we experience when we behold their beauty. The seventh verse recounts more of the benefits provided by livestock, namely, their ability to carry heavy loads for us over long distances, a task which would be incredibly difficult for us to do ourselves. The eighth verse discusses the fun of taking them out for a pleasure ride. Whereas the previous verse spoke of the use of these beasts of burden for transport, the blessing of having them “for you to ride” is the enjoyment of riding itself.



We thus have a responsibility to take advantage of both the bare essentials and the more aesthetic things nature has to offer us so that we can cultivate our physical, psychological, and mental health. On the other hand, we also have a responsibility to preserve both the hard benefits and the beauty of nature, and use them in the best and most beautiful way possible.

“Have you [Prophet] not considered how God sends water down from the sky and that We produce with it fruits of varied colors; that there are in the mountains layers of white and red of various hues, and jet black; that there are various colors among human beings, wild animals, and livestock too? It is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of God. God is almighty, most forgiving.” [35:27-28]

This reflects how God has created this world with a vast variety of shapes and a harmonious array of colors, a dazzling sight which is a joy to behold.

“The two bodies of water are not alike – one is palatable, sweet, and pleasant to drink, the other salty and bitter – yet from each you eat fresh fish and extract ornaments to wear.” [35:12]

God has put palatable water, salty water, and fresh fish at our disposal. Notice how all these things are described: fresh water is “palatable and pleasant to drink”, ocean water is “salty and bitter”, while the *fruits de mer* are “fresh”. This points to how God has not only given us the means for survival, but has also made them alluring and delightful. The Qur’an then proceeds to note another blessing God has placed in the world, namely, those ornaments hidden under the riverbed which we wear for adornment, such as pearl.

### *The Commandment to Develop the Earth:*

“It was He who brought you into being from the earth and had you inhabit it (*isti ‘marakum fiha*).” [11:61]

God is commanding us here to develop (*a ‘mara*, from the same root as *ista ‘mara*) the earth, which encompasses all actions which help keep the earth in good order and foster the conditions necessary for life. Since the whole world, with all of its components, stands at our service, we in turn have the obligation to preserve and develop it.

Through developing the world, we can become better servants of the Lord, because by gaining more knowledge of the secrets of the universe, we can better discern God’s wisdom. To this end, we must deeply contemplate the micro- and macro-relationships which tie together all the individual components of the universe. In other words, if we are to properly go about developing the world, we need to formulate a holistic view of the First Cause (i.e., God), our relationship to Him, and our relationship with the rest of creation.

Developing the earth can be understood as the attempt to establish a just and virtuous society where humans can enjoy the dignity God intended for them, and where they can enjoy true freedom, that *sine que non* of responsibility. Such society would be in harmony with nature and humankind, predominated by the values of love and mercy.

Legally speaking, the developmental process has to balance the three

dimensions of our being (body, mind, spirit), so that none is dimension is emphasized at the expense of any of the other two. This balance is exactly what the Prophet aimed to achieve when he founded the mosque in Medina as the first public institution. This mosque was used for providing refuge for the poor, hosting delegations, performing ritual acts of worship, delivering religious lectures, organizing military assignments, awarding those who had proven their courage and valor in battle, strategic planning, and religious preaching.

The Prophet's mosque was the heart of Muslim society, beating night and day. Through physical, intellectual, and spiritual instruction, it prepared Muslims for a renaissance that catapulted them to global preeminence for centuries to come.

"It is He who produces both trellised and untrellised gardens, date palms, crops of diverse flavors, the olive, the pomegranate, alike yet different. So when they bear fruit, eat some of it, paying what is due on the day of harvest, but do not be wasteful: God does not like wasteful people." [6:141]

Note how this verse addresses the three dimensions of our being. First, it calls on us to ponder the wonder and wisdom of God's multi-colored creation, which brings the greatest joy to our mind. Secondly, it encourages us to eat, which is a pleasure for our physical body. Thirdly, it calls on us to purify our soul through giving our wealth away in charity, which helps foster our inner peace and happiness. Finally, the verse prohibits us from being prodigal, so that we will learn to live a balanced life.



Thus, Islam envisions the process of developing the world as having two components: a proper paradigm, and applying perfection and the utmost diligence in one's work.

To ensure that this mission succeeds, both components need to be in order. As God says, "How many towns steeped in wrongdoing have We destroyed and left in total ruin (lit., 'collapsing on its trellises'); how many deserted wells; how many lofty palaces!" [22:45] "Steeped in wrongdoing" means that their paradigm was corrupt, which led to the ruin of their environment and urban space.

To quote the famous historian and exegete al-Tabari, "[The people referred to in this verse] perished, while the town emptied of its inhabitants, crumbling, "collapsing on its trellises" – a metaphor meaning it collapsed on its roofs and buildings. When the general population was destroyed, those who tended the wells perished along with them, so that the wells became deserted and filled up... God also let the palaces built high with stones and mortar become deserted, devoid of any residents. Because of their evil deeds, these people perished and their lofty palaces were emptied..."

"[Just like] the former communities We destroyed for doing wrong: We set an appointed time for their destruction." [18:59]

In his famous book "The Introduction" (*Prolegomena*), Ibn Khaldun included a chapter entitled "How Inequity Can Herald Urban Decay": "Know that the wisdom of God prohibiting inequity is that it results in the ruin and decay of urban civilization, which in turn heralds the extinction of the human race. This is a universal axiom which observes the Law in all of its five

objectives: the preservation of religion, life, mind, offspring, and wealth.”<sup>20</sup>

Experience has shown that material progress is accompanied by a retrogression of moral values, which results in the degradation of the environment and the destruction of civilization. When we follow a corrupt worldview, we are in conflict with the order of the universe, which will inevitably make us wretched and racked by anxiety and confusion. This is because the universe observes certain laws and is connected to its Creator, praising Him and bowing down to Him. If we approach the world haphazardly and chaotically, without a set worldview, while at the same time cutting off our own relationship to our only two sources of knowledge (revelation and the universe), we will inevitably become inundated with ignorance. We will come into conflict with everything and everyone around us, ruining our lives and theirs, both in ways we are aware of, as well as ways that we are not aware of.

This is why we always find the Lord strongly emphasizing the need for faith (paradigm) in conjunction with good works (practical application); similarly, He always reaffirms our right to take advantage of nature’s blessings in conjunction with our duty to work with our utmost diligence: “Messengers, eat good things and do good deeds: I am well aware of what you do.” [23:51]

“[Prophet Solomon:] Lord, inspire me to be thankful for the blessings You have granted me and my parents, and to do good deeds that please You.” [27:19]



After God placed nature at the personal service of the prophet Solomon, he learned the language of the insects and the birds. Solomon then prayed that he would be grateful for being guided to the proper worldview, and that he would always perform good deeds (practical application) pleasing to God.

“It was not without purpose that We created the heavens and the earth and everything in between. That may be what the disbelievers assume – how they will suffer from the Fire! – but would We treat those who believe and do good deeds and those who spread corruption on earth as equal?” [38:27-28]

Those who believe and do good deeds follow the proper worldview and are engaged in the practical application that it promotes. They believe that God has established the heavens and the earth on justice and for a true purpose, and that He has not created them in vain nor for His own self-amusement. On the other hand, those who spread corruption on earth have rejected the proper worldview and have turned away from doing good deeds because of their poor estimation of God, falsely thinking that He would create the universe without any particular purpose.

“If only there had been, among the generations before your time, people with a remnant of good sense, to forbid corruption on the earth! We saved only a few of them, while the unjust pursued the enjoyment of plenty, and persisted in sin. Your Lord would not destroy any town without cause if its people were acting righteously.” [11:116-117]

These verses delineate a solid, integrated worldview whose aim is for us to struggle against injustice.



“And persisted in sin”: those who spread corruption with their inequity and sin. The nations of old were destroyed because inequity prevailed in their societies, which resulted from their abandoning the forbidding the evil and giving in to their false desires.

“If you turn away now, could it be that you will go on to spread corruption all over the land and break your ties of kinship?” [47:22]

If you turn away from the divine way, your evil deeds will lead to corruption, destruction, and the dissolution of the family. The spread of corruption refers to how this evil will affect the earth, while the severing of familial ties refers to how this evil will affect humans; this again alludes to the structural unity of the Qur’anic text mentioned earlier.

“When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption on earth, destroying crops and offspring – God does not like corruption.” [2:205]

Turning away from the way of truth can only lead to degradation of the environment, to the detriment of both humans and animals.

Both the structural unity of the Qur’an and the structural unity of creation are the greatest testimony to the unity of the Creator.

### *Prohibition of Spreading Corruption*

God created the various components of the universe in harmony with one another, as manifested in such phenomena as the ebb and flow of the tides or the forces of attraction and repulsion which propel something as enormous as a planet in its orbit and something as minute as an electron in its atom. If gravity were to overpower the force of repulsion or vice-versa, it would cause a serious disturbance in the order of the universe.

Similarly, our relationships with one another as well as with other beings (whether living or non-living) are made up of a combination of centrifugal and centripetal forces, of love and hate, of peace and conflict. It is essential that we maintain a balance in these relations, or else they will become out of synch.

“Those who **break their covenant with God** after it has been confirmed, who **sever** the bonds that God has commanded to be joined, who **spread corruption on the earth** – those are **the losers**.” [2:27]

“Break their covenant with God”: i.e., they distort God’s way. “Sever the bonds that God has commanded to be joined”: i.e., they disrupt the relationship between themselves and others, between humankind and God, and between humankind and the universe, by severing what should be enjoined and enjoining what ought to be severed. This can only lead to ruin and wretchedness in this life, and the loss of grace in the next.

God has created within us and within His other creatures a natural tendency toward uprightness and order. Our innate nature calls on us to be

loving and peaceful; it is only when our hearts become blackened with sin that corruption appears in our society and our environment. As God says, "Corruption has flourished on land and sea as a result of people's actions and He will make them taste the consequences of some of their own actions so that they may turn back." [30:41]

So that they may return to their original state which they had abandoned, the state of righteousness, by setting right what they had corrupted, by seeking guidance in God's way, and by applying perfection and beauty in their work.

"[Prophet Shu'ayb:] A clear sign has come to you from your Lord. Give full measure and **weight** and do not undervalue people's goods; **do not cause corruption on the earth** after it has been set in order: this is better for you, if you are believers." [7:85]

The prophet Shu'ayb enjoined on his people to fulfill their obligations toward others and to give full measure – i.e., to make sure that all their relationships were properly tended to by judging with truth, justice, and equality, for this maintains the affairs of both humans and the earth in good order.

God commanded Qarun to stop transgressing the bounds of what is right, spreading corruption, and severing the ties between God and His creation. The root cause of these sins was that Qarun thought that he could rely solely on himself: "Do good to others as God has done good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption on earth, for God does not love those who do this." [28:77]



“Who could be more wicked than those who prohibit the mention of God’s name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted?” [2:114]

There is no one more corrupt than one who forbids God’s righteous servants from mentioning His name and teaching His way in His houses of worship. There is no one more wicked than those who strive to have these sacred temples deserted, whether physically by tearing them down, or psychologically by attacking the role they play in raising awareness of the truth and justice with spiritual knowledge. Indeed, this is nothing less than an attack on the human freedom of religion.

The Messenger of God once declared the whole earth to be a mosque – pure and suitable for prayer. If we interpret “God’s...places of worship” in a broad sense as referring to the earth in its entirety, this verse would be understood as, “There is no one more wicked than those who strive to spread corruption on earth by attacking God’s way and free thought” or: “by attacking the environment and urban civilization.”

### *Love vs. Corruption*

In the Qur’an, there is a converse relationship between love and corruption.

“We have sown enmity and hatred amongst [the Jews] till the Day of Resurrection. Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God will put it out. They try to spread corruption on earth, but God **does not love those who corrupt (al-mufsidin)**.” [5:64]

Enmity and hatred lead to conflict and aggression, that is, to the spread of corruption on earth.

The phrase “those who corrupt (*al-mufsidin*)” is an active participle of the fourth-form verb “to spread/cause corruption (*afsada*, from *fasad*, “corruption”). This indicates that love and peace are the original state of creation, and that enmity and hatred are a corruption of this original state. God is declaring here that He does not care for those who actively promote corruption. In other passages of the Qur’an, God mentions how He does not care for corruption (*fasad*) itself: “God does not like corruption” [2:205].

On a related note, Islamic law prohibits us from inflicting harm on ourselves or taking our own lives: “do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do good.” [2:195]

God loves those who do good, not those who spread corruption; He loves those who are just, not those who violate others’ rights. “**Do not corrupt the earth** after it has been set right – call on Him fearing and hoping. The mercy of God is close to **those who do good**.” [7:56]

“Do not obey those who are given to excess and who spread corruption in the earth instead of doing what is right.” [26:151-152]

The Prophet forbade his followers from spreading corruption on earth. Once, when they were preparing themselves for battle, he told them not to “steal war booty, commit treachery, maim the enemy, or kill children.”<sup>21</sup> [And do not burn down any houses of worship or damage any date palms.”]<sup>22</sup>

Abu Bakr echoed this injunction to the army of Usama ibn Zayd: "I want to advise you about ten things: do not kill women, children, or the elderly; do not cut down any fruit-bearing trees; do not destroy any inhabited places; do not slaughter or harm any sheeps or camels, unless you intend to eat them; do not burn down or drown any date palms; do not steal war booty; and always display bravery."<sup>23</sup>

Muslims are the ambassadors of peace to everyone and everything; they are not here to wage war on humankind, nor are they here to pointlessly tear nature apart.

### *Prohibition of Excess and the Enjoinment of Moderation and Sharing*

Excessive use of natural resources leads to waste, something which God has prohibited.

"Remember when Moses prayed for water for his people and We said to him, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Twelve springs gushed out, and each group knew its drinking place. 'Eat and drink the sustenance God has provided you and do not cause corruption in the earth.'" [2:60]

Excessive use of natural resources is a drain on the environment, inevitably mutilating it and in the process threatening humankind's very existence. There are multiple verses in the Qur'an which prohibit excess and enjoin moderation.



“Do not squander your wealth wastefully: those who squander are the brothers of Satan, and Satan is most ungrateful to his Lord.” [17:26-27]

“Do not be tight-fisted, nor so open-handed that you end up blamed and overwhelmed with regret.” [17:29]

“They are those who are neither wasteful nor niggardly when they spend, but keep to a just balance.” [25:67]

“Children of Adam, dress well whenever you are at worship, and eat and drink [as We have permitted] but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people.” [7:31]

Using nature’s resources prodigally encroaches on the right of others to partake in the essentials of life, such as eating and drinking their share from God’s sustenance.

In the Islamic worldview, the concept of God putting the universe at our disposal entails that all people should be able to equally share nature’s benefits.

“It was He who created all that is on earth for you.” [2:29]

This verse could be interpreted in two ways. The word “all” could refer to the relative pronoun “that”, or to the pronoun “you (pl.)”. Thus, this verse could be translated as “It was He who created all that is on earth for you” or as “It was He who created what is on earth for all of you.”

Regarding the equality of all humans, Islamic law has ordained the universal right of mankind to partake and share collectively in the essentials of life. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon Muslims to cooperate with others in preserving and taking care of the environment. Nevertheless, Muslims carry a greater responsibility, in that they also have a duty to call people to the Straight Path, a duty which represents the second half of their mission to build-up and develop the earth.

“God placed solid mountains on the earth, blessed them, and measured out their varied provisions for all who seek them – all in four days.” [41:10]

“[F]or all who seek them”: again, indicating the equality of sharing. God has measured out for all people their provisions on earth, meaning that the earth will never lack for sustenance, nor will it give to some people but not others. This is because God has made His sustenance available for all who seek it.

God does not spread out His blessings on the basis of what religion we follow. The world gives her blessings to us based on the fact that we all created by God. The material goods we obtain are based on how much knowledge we have, how hard we work, and to what degree we conform to the laws of nature; but it certainly is not conditioned on our state of faith. This is because God wanted us to approach Him voluntarily, out of love. If God had so willed, He could have forced us to obey Him, as is the case with the rest of creation. Instead, God made food and security equally available to those who believe and those who reject the truth, so that their physical needs would not coerce them into religion.

“Tell them the water is to be shared between them: each one should drink in turn.” [54:28]

Water is the origin of life here on earth; without it, both humans and animals would perish. This is why water must be shared among everyone without exception.

In this respect, the Islamic worldview is completely at odds with the aggressive and rapacious outlook of materialism which envisions humans as the absolute masters – bar none – of their possessions. By contrast, Islam promotes love and peace and upholds the concept of humans as caretakers of the world.

There are several reports from the Prophetic tradition which enjoin sharing resources and responsibility:

The Prophet once said, “Every creature is amongst God’s dependents. The most beloved of God’s servants to Him are those that are the most useful to His dependents.”<sup>24</sup>

In his time, the Prophet ordained that the people be given access to three things: water, pasturage, and fire, which respectively represent the sources of life, food, and energy. As Ibn ‘Abbas related from the Messenger of God, “Muslims are to be partners in three things: water, pasturage, and fire. Selling off any of these things is forbidden.” Abu Sa‘id commented that, “‘Water’ here refers to watercourses.”<sup>25</sup> Some narrations say, “**People** are to be partners...”



Abu Hurayra related that the Messenger of God once said, "Access to three things should never be cut off: water, pasturage, and fire."<sup>26</sup>

Abu Hurayra also related that the Messenger of God said, "Access to excess water should not be cut off to prevent the cultivation of extra pasturage."<sup>27</sup>

The second and third hadith explain the first one. The Prophet is telling us that God has made these three things a public good. The Prophet was not divvying up these goods; the point is that *everyone* has the right to take according to their need, leaving the rest to be used by others or otherwise leaving these resources to proceed along their natural cycle.

Of course, there are many natural resources which should be open to all, but the Prophet mentioned these three because of their fundamental importance. In certain narrations, the Prophet also mentions salt. This was a legal ruling from the Prophet in his capacity as governor of the Muslim community. His real objective was to prevent a monopoly over resources as fundamental as these. It may be inferred from this that Muslim rulers have the right to enact laws to prevent the monopolization of resources necessary for the well-being of the populace and the environment.

Water in particular is something no living being can do without. Accordingly, the Prophet threatened those who control water resources and prevent wayfarers from using them to quench their thirst: "There are three people that God will not look at on the Day of Judgment, nor purify, and who will face an agonizing torment. One of them is someone who owned a source of water on a causeway, but did not allow wayfarers to drink from it."<sup>28</sup>

Although Islam recognizes private property, it also affirms that there are some things which need to be classified as a public good. The preservation and development of the environment falls between these two. Humankind's instinct to possess and control wealth is recognized and honored in Islam; nevertheless, in your quest for wealth, you may not encroach on the public right of access to the essentials of life, such as water, air, and basic nutrition. Islam seeks to use both institutions of private and public property in the service of humankind. Islam has enjoined the duty of preserving the environment on both individuals, in their capacity as the original owners or inheritors of that property; and on the state, which is responsible for protecting individual property and for prosecuting those who would squander their resources to the detriment of themselves and society as a whole.

In the Islamic worldview, the institution of private property encourages environmental conservation by providing incentives for people to work hard and diligently. The Prophet himself utilized the institution of private property to promote development and make the environment more productive and efficient, as has been related from his saying: "Whoever revives a plot of dead land is entitled to it. As for the previous neglectful owner, he has no right over it."<sup>29</sup> In this hadith, "dead plot of land" refers to one that has not been developed. Its being developed is likened to life, whereas its being left untended is likened to death.

This hadith demonstrates respect for those who work hard, while providing incentives for work. Specifically, it uses the institution of private property as an incentive for individuals to develop the earth.



At the same time, Islamic law obligates Muslim rulers to prevent a small elite from controlling public goods and preventing the general populace from accessing them. The caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab provided a strong precedent for this: during his reign, some people had set aside a plot of land for themselves, but then left it alone for a long time without developing it, while at the same time preventing others from doing so. These people manipulated the apparent meaning of the Prophet's saying, "Those who revive a dead plot of land are entitled to it", thereby squandering the benefits of the land for both themselves and the rest of their community. In reaction to this, 'Umar one day climbed the pulpit and declared that "Although those who revive a dead plot of land are entitled to it, this does not include those who set aside a plot of land and leave it alone for three years."

A man named Bilal ibn al-Harith, whom the Prophet had allotted a large plot of land in 'Aqiq, did not develop the land for quite some time. 'Umar approached him, "Given that you asked the Messenger of God – who never said no to anyone – to allot you this expansive plot of land, you should divide it up for others. You don't have the resources to develop all of it, do you?" "No, I don't actually." "In that case," 'Umar said, "determine how much you can develop yourself, and hand the rest over to us so that we can divide it among the Muslim community." "By God, I won't do that!" Bilal retorted. "The Messenger of God set this land aside for *me*!" "By God, you *will* in fact do it!" and 'Umar proceeded to appropriate the land Bilal was unable to develop, dividing it up among the Muslim community.<sup>30</sup>

'Umar tried to explain to Bilal that the Messenger of God had not appropriated this land to him so that it could be withheld from the people. However, Bilal refused to hand over the land he could not cultivate, arguing



with Umar based on a flawed understanding of the Prophet's intent. Instead of bothering to even respond with a counter-argument, 'Umar simply appropriated the land.

'Umar perfectly understood the Prophet's intent. It may be deduced from 'Umar's policy that Muslim rulers may reallocate private property if it impedes development. The opportunities for employment and investment made 'Umar appropriate these resources and redirect them for the common good.

Islam has prohibited the unproductive hoarding of wealth and there are other precedents from the Islamic legal tradition which reaffirm that 'Umar properly understood the spirit of the Prophetic tradition, such as the collection of the alms-tax (*zakat*) on wealth which has not been invested or actively used.

Under Islamic law, we are not allowed to use our natural resources in a selfish manner; no one generation or one nation may use up all available resources. Accordingly, the history of Islamic civilization is full of examples of people of various ethnicities and religions sharing their resources. Non-Muslims not only acted as ministers and ambassadors of the Islamic state, but even as rulers in areas under the orbit of the Islamic empire. Similarly, non-Arabs ruled various parts of the Islamic world, reaching even the position of the caliphate, such as the Buwayhids (Persian) and the Seljuqs and Ottomans (Turkish).

Similarly, in the history of Islamic civilization, all those who worked hard could grow rich, regardless of religious affiliation; indeed, some non-Muslims possessed wealth they could not have dreamed of under the Byzantines. On

a related note, Medina (the first capital of the Islamic state), for example, never appropriated the wealth of its Muslim subjects from other parts of the empire.

From early on, the caliph 'Umar appreciated that future generations of both Muslims and non-Muslims were entitled to the benefits of the land. Thus, when the Muslims conquered the rural part of Iraq, and were about to divide it up as spoils of war, 'Umar refused, arguing that the rights of future generations had to be safeguarded. If a land as expansive as this were to become the personal property of a handful of people, what would remain for subsequent generations? How would they be able to benefit from what the land has to offer? How could they escape being property-less wage workers? If they became unable to work, how would the state feasibly support them?

### *Environmental Equilibrium*

Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining the environmental equilibrium, and enjoins the preservation of all species to this end.

1. Environmental equilibrium demands the conservation of nature's resources in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

God has very deliberately established a set measurement for every component of the universe. Similarly, He has regulated the interrelationships between these components with an unerringly exact scale. Any interference on our part which disturbs the quantitative equilibrium (measurement) or the qualitative equilibrium (interrelationships) will inevitably result in environmental degradation and in turn threaten our survival.

“As for the earth, We have spread it out, set firm mountains on it, and made everything grow there in due balance.” [15:19]

“There is not a thing whose storehouses are not with Us. We send it down only according to a well-defined measure.” [15:21]

“God knows what every female bears and how much their wombs shrink or swell – everything has its measure with Him.” [13:8]

“He sends rain from the sky that fills the vallies, each according to its measure. The stream carries on its surface a growing layer of foam. And from that [ore] which they heat in the fire, desiring adornments and utensils, is a foam like it. Thus Allah presents [the example of] truth and falsehood. As for the foam, it vanishes, [being] cast off; but as for that which benefits the people, it remains on the earth. Thus Allah puts forth parables.” [13:17]

Note the phrase “fills the vallies, **each according to its measure**”. This indicates how the amount of rainfall is measured out in accordance with the size of the valley and what it can contain. From this it can be implicitly understood that, if this measure is disrupted, the earth will be ruined and humankind destroyed. The reason being that, if the volume of the earth’s waterways is increased beyond its predetermined measure, they will swell over and drown out all signs of human life. The same result would occur if the rivers contracted too much.

There is something else to be noted from this passage: “in this way God illustrates truth and falsehood – the foam disappears, but what is of benefit to humans stays behind in the earth – this is how God puts forth



parables.” The truth (*haqq*) here (i.e., the true purpose the world was created for) is represented by what is beneficial to us, namely, the development of the earth and the facilitation of life for its inhabitants. This is what remains in the earth, meaning its beneficial effects persist. Falsehood (corruption, vanity, inequity) is represented here by the froth that disappears. It does not provide any real benefit, nor will its effects last on the earth. On the contrary, it is a waste of the earth’s resources and of human life.

“We have created all things in due measure.” [54:49]

“The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses; the plants and the trees submit to His designs; He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance: weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance.” [55:5-9]

The phrases that should be noted from these verses: calculated courses, balance, and justice. These verses deal with God’s creation and command, which are both based on truth and balance and call upon us to maintain this balance and not to destroy it, by either by overly exploiting the world (quantitatively) or in the relationships that governs our usage of the world (qualitatively).

2. Environmental equilibrium also demands the preservation of all the world’s species.

“All the creatures that crawl on the earth and those that fly with their wings are communities like yourselves. We have missed nothing out of the Record – in the end they will be gathered to their Lord.”

“Communities like yourselves”: i.e., similar to us in that they are also God’s creation, and that they share the earth with us. Respecting their right to live is part of developing the earth and keeping it in good order. For this reason, God commanded Noah to bring a pair of every living species aboard his ark.

“Bring on board this Ark a pair of each species, and your own family – except those against whom the sentence has already been passed.” [11:40]

God emphasized the importance of preserving all of nature’s species to the point that He tied their survival to the survival of Noah’s family and the believers. The ark was a vessel of salvation for them all, just as the earth had been a common sanctuary where they all venerated life together. This reflects the importance of maintaining nature’s equilibrium and the survival of all living communities – whether human or animal – on earth.

The Prophetic tradition calls on us to respect insects, animals, and birds, and to strive to ensure their survival as a species. They are communities that have been put here on earth by God; their survival is part of the natural equilibrium which is essential to our own survival.

The Messenger of God said, “An ant once bit a prophet of God, so the prophet had the ant’s colony burned. Through revelation, God asked him why he had incinerated one of God’s communities devoted to His praise just because one of its members had bit him.”<sup>31</sup>

The Prophet also said, “If dogs did not constitute a community, I would have ordered the death of them all. Instead, kill only those that are jet-



black.”<sup>32</sup>

But why would the Prophet want to obliterate something God had created? After all, there is a wisdom behind everything God has created.

Al-Nawawi noted that, “The Prophet at first ordered the killing of dogs, but subsequently said, ‘Why would we want to bother with them?’ allowing his followers to keep them for the purpose of hunting or guarding sheep. Our colleagues in the Shafi‘i school of law are of the opinion that, if the dog is rabid, it should be killed; otherwise, it may not be killed, regardless of whether it may be used for any of the aforementioned purposes. Imam Abu l-Ma‘ali – the imam of the two holy sanctuaries – maintained that, ‘The command to kill dogs has been abrogated. Although it is true that the Messenger of God once ordered the killing of dogs, it is equally true that he subsequently forbade this. Islamic law has settled on the latter ruling [that they should not be killed], with the qualifications previously noted. The Prophet also initially ordered that jet-black dogs be killed, but that ruling has since been abrogated as well [apparently, this type of dog was rabid, and had fanned throughout Medina].’ This is the position of the Imam of the two holy sanctuaries, to which nothing more need be said. And God knows best.”<sup>33</sup>

The Prophet’s general command to kill dogs, his subsequent qualification to kill only jet-black dogs, and then his prohibition to harm dogs all aimed to maintain the environmental equilibrium. What initially prompted this was the increase in the number of dogs in Medina to the point that they threatened the safety of humans and other animals. The Prophet only did this out of mercy.



3. Natural reserves promote environmental equilibrium:

The Prophet stated that, "Ibrahim made Mecca a sanctuary and now I deem Medina as a sanctuary. Consider everything between the two rocky areas as a sanctuary. Its plants must not be uprooted, nor should its animals be harmed or hunted. Lost items shall not be picked up, except if one can prove ownership. Its trees shall not be chopped down unless to feed one's camels, and no one shall bear arms in it with the intention of fighting."<sup>34</sup>

The Prophet also said, "I have declared what is between the two rocky areas of Medina to be a sacred sanctuary just as Abraham declared Mecca a sacred sanctuary." The narrator added that, "Abu Sa'id [who narrated this to us] then took a bird which one of us was holding in their hand and let it fly away."<sup>35</sup>

This is the closest example of a natural reserve as understood in a modern sense, although note that the Islamic reserve not only protects plants, animals, and humans from destruction, it ensures that they *feel safe* from even the fear of harm. The Islamic reserve which represents a sacred sanctuary must be honored by man and be maintained as a safe haven for every living being that enters it.

## *Environmental Peace*

Environmental peace is based on respecting other humans, recognizing that they are also part of the environment, and treating them in the best manner possible. Thus, protecting our fellow humans and helping them to develop their capabilities are part of our mission as God's deputies. Any attack on their physical body, dignity, or freedoms is the gravest assault against nature herself, because it is *they* who must act as nature's protectors.

### *Respect for one's fellow humans is based on:*

1. Humility, which entails respecting others' humanity, and not acting arrogantly toward them for any reason. Even if they are obstinately ungrateful for the Lord's blessings, those of us who have been blessed with guidance to that true faith which is in harmony with both the mind and the heart should respect their right to partake in nature's blessings and in the preservation of our common survival.

The Prophet once said, "God revealed to me that you should all practice humility, not wrong one another, and not act arrogant."<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, humility doesn't mean disdaining yourself or denying yourself your due sense of dignity. As Abu Sa'id related from the Prophet, "None of you should disdain your own self." His companions replied, "Messenger of God, how could we conceivably do that to ourselves?" He said, "If someone knows that God has commanded them to say something, but they don't actually do it, and then on the Day of Judgment, God will ask them, "What prevented you from being forthright with the truth?" 'I was

afraid of how people would react.' And God will say to them, 'It was *Me* you should have feared above all others.'"<sup>37</sup>

## 2. Not harassing others

The Prophet explicitly forbade harassing one's neighbors.

As Abu Hurayra related from the Prophet, "Those whose neighbors are not safe from their harassment will not enter Paradise."<sup>38</sup>

Based on this narration, Muslims must absolutely refrain from harassing their neighbors in any manner. Note that the word "neighbor" (*jar*) here is very inclusive (more so than the English), encompassing Muslims and non-Muslims, rich and poor, fellow compatriots and foreigners, those living nearby and those living far away, individuals and groups. Similarly, "neighbors" include those who physically live in your neighborhood, but also your close friends, travel companions, co-workers, and fellow worshippers.

The word "harassment" is similarly very inclusive, encompassing anything which pollutes or disrupts the human environment, regardless of whether it entails visual, air, or noise pollution, and regardless of whether it is physical or non-physical. The protection of the environment begins with the protection of one's neighbor.

Note that this hadith not only forbids harassing one's neighbor, it also enjoins on us the responsibility of making them *feel* safe and secure living next to Muslims. This can only be achieved by constantly being charitable and kind to our neighbors and giving them the greetings of peace.



An example of the sort of harassment referred to in the hadith: hanging up posters or writing things on people's wall without their permission. This is a violation of people's personal space, because the outside of their property is just as much theirs as the inside.

And how much more outrageous is it when certain countries shove their radioactive waste down their neighbors' throats, burying it under their soil without permission?

There is nothing more indicative of the Prophet's respect for his neighbors than his habit of refraining from eating garlic and onions so as to not bother his fellow worshippers with bad breath, as well as his injunction to wear one's best clothing whenever going to the mosque.

Al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad once described the Messenger of God's gentleness toward those around him, and how he strove his utmost to avoid bothering them: "We once milked some of our livestock, and each of us drank his share. We offered some to the Prophet when he arrived, for it was his routine to come at night and say hello without waking anybody up. Only those already awake could hear him."<sup>39</sup>

When the Prophet would rise from sleep to perform the night prayer—whether at home or at the mosque – he would recite the Qur'an in a voice audible only to those already awake, without disturbing those about to drop off, much less those already plunged in sleep.

In turn, when they approached his house, the Prophet's companions would make their call by lightly tapping on his door with their fingernails, out of deference.<sup>40</sup>

3. Love. The Messenger of God said, "None of you truly believes until you want for your brethren what you want for yourself."<sup>41</sup>

In conclusion, Islamic culture is, by its very nature, environmentalist, since it fosters respect for other people's health and sensitivities, regardless of whether our canon explicitly addresses this or not.

### *The Commandment to Promote Cleanliness for Ourselves and the Environment*

Islam stipulates that, in order for the ritual prayer to be properly performed, Muslims must purify their bodies and their attire, cover their private parts, and pray in a location cleansed of impurities.

Islam has ordained purification as the path to divine love:

"God loves those who turn to Him, and He loves those who keep themselves clean." [2:222]

This refers to physical purity, i.e., cleanliness of the outward body.

"In this mosque there are men who desire to grow in purity – God loves those who seek to purify themselves." [9:108]

Purity here refers to the purity of the human being, including purity of mind and soul, sound thinking, and following the proper paradigm.

Many Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadith enjoin Muslims to adhere to cleanliness and purity:

1. Prohibition of polluting the environment

- A. "Abi Barza said, 'Prophet of God, teach me something that will benefit me.' The Prophet responded, 'Remove anything that would disturb Muslims as they go along on their pathways.'"<sup>42</sup>
- B. The Messenger of God said, "Beware of being one of the two types of people who are damned." Those around him asked, "Who are these two types of people?" "One who relieves himself on public pathways, and the other relieves himself in areas used for shade."<sup>43</sup>
- C. The Messenger of God once said, "Beware of committing the three accursed sins: defecating in watercourses, defecating in the middle of the road, and defecating in areas used for shade."<sup>44</sup>

2. The obligation to diligently seek the most effective medical treatment

The Prophet once said, "Seek medical cures for your ailments, for God has created a medicine for every disease, with the sole exception of old age."<sup>45</sup>



### 3. The obligation to prevent the spread of disease

From the beginning, Islam promoted a policy of quarantines to prevent the spread of disease from one locale to another. The Prophet once enjoined on his companions that, "If you catch word of it [i.e., the plague] being in a certain land, do not approach that territory. And if the plague strikes the land you find yourself in, do not flee."<sup>46</sup>

### 4. Command to keep one's space clean

The Prophet was an exemplary model of cleanliness for his companions. For example, he would go around the mosque with a broom and sweep away the dust.<sup>47</sup>

Another testimony to his profound concern for cleanliness: One day, the woman who used to oversee the maintenance of the mosque passed away, but the Prophet's companions didn't think much of it, so they neglected to inform the Prophet of her passing. When the Prophet noticed her absence, he asked about her. When he was informed of what happened, he became saddened, and rebuked his companions for not properly appreciating her role. Not only that, he took them and stood over her grave to pray for her. It then became clear to the Companions how her role as cleaner of the mosque had bestowed on her a lofty station. As Abu Hurayra related, "A black woman – or a young man – used to sweep up the mosque. One day, the Prophet noticed their absence and asked about them. When he was told that they had

passed on, he asked his companions, 'Why didn't you tell me?!' [The narrator noted, "Apparently, the companions did not think much of their role as a cleaner.] 'Bring me to their grave.' The Prophet was led to their grave, where he prayed for them. 'These graves are inundated with darkness, but through my prayer, God illuminates them.'"<sup>48</sup>

5. Commandment to keep one's hands clean

- A. The Prophet once said, "The blessing of food lies in performing the ritual ablution (*wudu* ' ) before and after eating."<sup>49</sup>

Ritual ablution (*wudu* ' ) here does not refer to the full ablution performed before prayers, but only to washing the hands and cleansing the mouth from offensive smells. Using the more comprehensive term "ritual ablution" may be only metaphorical, or it could be based on the original denotation of the word. Some say that the wisdom behind washing our hands before eating is that, because they are always engaged in various tasks, they are never free from filth; thus, washing them is the closest we can approach true immaculateness. Similarly, "ritual ablution" after eating refers only to washing the hands and mouth from any leftover grease.<sup>50</sup>

- B. The Prophet commanded his followers to wash their hands before using them for anything after waking up: "Whenever you wake up, pour water over your hands three times before placing them in any container, because you don't know where they were while

you were asleep.”<sup>51</sup>

6. Commandment to keep one’s mouth clean

- A. The Prophet forcefully emphasized the obligation to keep our mouths clean: “Those who consume garlic or onion should stay away from us” – or he might have said – “should stay away from our mosque, and stay at home.”<sup>52</sup>

In other words, those who do not keep their mouths clean and do not keep themselves smelling good are forbidden from praying in congregation because they might disturb their fellow worshippers.

- B. To this end, the Prophet would always use a *siwak* (a twig used to clean the teeth), even while on his deathbed. It should be noted that the *siwak* is made from plants, and that it helps keep our mouths, teeth, and gums clean. Furthermore, it is user-friendly, pocket-sized, readily-available, and cheap.

The Prophet once said, “A clean mouth is pleasing to the Lord.”<sup>53</sup>

He also said, “If it weren’t too much of a burden on my nation” – or he might have said “the people” – “I would have commanded them to use a *siwak* before every ritual prayer.”<sup>54</sup>



7. Commandment to keep one's hair clean

A. The Prophet once said, "Those blessed with hair should honor it."<sup>55</sup>

B. It has been narrated that Abu Qatada al-Ansari once asked the Messenger of God, "Since I have thick hair, should I keep it combed?" "Yes," the Prophet replied, "honor it." Because of this command, Abu Qatada would oil his hair up to twice a day.<sup>56</sup>

C. Once, when the Messenger of God was at the mosque, a man with unkempt hair and an unkempt beard came in. The Messenger of God gestured with his hand that he should leave, apparently indicating that the man should put his hair and beard in order first. The man did as he was told and came back. The Prophet then said, "Isn't this better than coming here and looking like a devil with such unruly hair?"<sup>57</sup>

D. Jabir ibn 'Abdullah related that, "The Messenger of God once came to us and saw a man with straggly hair, whereupon he remarked, 'Can't this man find anything to tame his hair with?' The Prophet then noticed a man wearing dirty garments. 'And couldn't this man find any water to wash his clothes with?'"<sup>58</sup>

8. Commandment to keep our attire clean

A. God Almighty commanded the Prophet to "cleanse your garments."  
[74:4]

B. The Messenger of God once stated that, "Those who hold an atom's weight of pride in their hearts will not enter Paradise." Someone interjected, "But people love to wear nice clothes and put on nice shoes." The Prophet replied, "Of course God is beautiful and loves beauty, [and there is nothing wrong with this]. What I meant by pride is disdaining the truth and holding others in contempt."<sup>59</sup>

C. Similarly, the Prophet once commanded that, "When you come to meet your brothers, clean what you ride upon and what you wear so that you may shine as a ray of beauty amongst the people. God does not like indecent speech or indecent acts."<sup>60</sup>

In conclusion, Muslims should distinguish themselves with beauty and perfection.

### *Preservation of Water:*

Water is the basis of life, as God says, "We made every living thing from water...Will they not believe?" [21:30]

With regards to placing water at humankind's disposal, God says, "It is God who created the heavens and earth, who has sent down water from the sky and with it brought forth produce to nourish you; He has made ships useful to you, sailing the sea by His command, and the rivers too." [14:32]

"In the water which God sends down from the sky to give life to the earth when it has been barren, scattering all kinds of creatures over it." [2:164]

1. The Prophet forbade his followers from polluting water sources. In this vein, he once prohibited urinating in standing water<sup>61</sup>, which not only makes it brackish and putrid, but also turns it into a hotbed for various diseases which in turn can foster epidemics.
2. Similarly, the Prophet ordered that we minimize the exposure of our food and drink to microbes: "Before retiring at night, put out your lamps, close your doors, tie up your waterskins, and cover all your food and drink containers, even if only with a wooden plank."<sup>62</sup>
3. For the same purpose, the Messenger of God forbade his followers from breathing on or blowing in their food and drink containers<sup>63</sup>, so that microbes emanating from the body would not spread onto them.
4. The Prophet would drink with at least three sips, instead of one large gulp, noting that, "This way is more quenching, healthy, and sound."<sup>64</sup>

This was in contrast to the habits of the pre-Islamic Bedouins, who would gulp their drinks down all at once, the water spilling onto their chest and dripping from their beard – the very image of an uncouth person who greedily wolfs down their food and drinks with abandon. The Prophet wanted his followers to disassociate themselves from this stereotype and present a clean-cut and urbane image.



5. Lastly, the Prophet forbade wasting water, even for the ritual ablution; he once passed by Sa'd as the latter was performing his ablutions. "Why are you wasting all this water?" Sa'd responded, "Is it possible to waste water when performing the ritual ablution?" "Indeed, even if you are washing yourself from a running stream."<sup>65</sup>

### *Conservation and Cultivation of Plants*

1. The Messenger of God once said, "Whoever chops down a lote tree will be thrown into Hell by Allah. " This means that one who cuts down such a tree in a barren region used by wayfarers and animals for shade, without a good reason.<sup>66</sup>
2. The Messenger of God also said, "Any Muslim who plants a tree will be rewarded whenever its fruits are eaten by man, animals, or birds, or if its fruits are stolen, or if anyone suffers any loss concerning it, then he will be rewarded."<sup>67</sup>
3. "Those who plant a tree and patiently tend to it until it bears fruit will have the reward of charity from God whenever anything happens to its fruit."<sup>68</sup>
4. "If the Day of Judgment comes to pass and you are holding a palm seedling in your hand, finish planting it."<sup>69</sup> In other words, the Prophet is encouraging us to persevere in our work, and to not allow anything to frustrate us.

### *Preservation of Animals and Showing Gentleness Toward Them*

1. The Prophet once said, "Don't ever use the backs of your animals as podiums to stand on. God put these animals at your service specifically for the purpose of transporting you to distant lands that you otherwise could only reach with severe travails. God has similarly put the earth at your disposal, so use it when answering the call of nature."<sup>70</sup>
2. 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far related that, "One day, the Messenger of God took me aside and told me something that I will never reveal to anyone. [He then indicated that he wished to relieve himself.] When responding to the call of nature, the Prophet preferred to go behind a hill or a date palm garden. Thus, he proceeded to enter a garden owned by an Ansari man, when he found a camel standing before him. Upon seeing the Prophet, the camel was moved to tears. The Prophet approached it and caressed its ears until it calmed down. He then asked those present, "Who is the owner of this camel? To whom does this camel belong?" A young Ansari man came forward. "It's mine, Messenger of God." The Prophet reproached him, "Don't you have any conscience toward this animal which God put in your possession? It has told me that you work it to exhaustion and starve it."<sup>71</sup>
3. "When traveling through a luscious region, let your camels eat their fill. When travelling through a barren region, speed up. And when you want to sleep at night, turn off the road."<sup>72</sup>

4. "There once was a woman who caged her cat until it died; as a result, she was thrown into the fire of Hell. This woman wouldn't feed her cat or give it water, while at the same time, she wouldn't let it go outside to feed off the fat of the land."<sup>73</sup>
5. "A man was once walking on his way and felt severe thirst. He came across a well, lowered himself down, and drank his fill. As he was coming, he noticed a dog panting from thirst, licking the ground [in search of some moisture]. The man thought to himself, 'This dog is just as thirsty as I was.' So he went back down the well, filled his shoe with water, clenched onto it with his mouth, came up, and gave it to the dog. God appreciated this act of kindness and forgave the man for all his past sins." The Prophet's companions asked, "Messenger of God, are we really rewarded for good deeds to animals?!" The Prophet responded, "There is a reward for doing a good deed for anything with a beating heart."<sup>74</sup>
6. Ibn 'Abbas related that the Messenger of God prohibited the staging of animal fights.<sup>75</sup>
7. Jabir related that a donkey branded on its face once passed by the Prophet. "Haven't you all heard that I have damned those who brand or hit animals' faces?" The Prophet then expressly forbade this.<sup>76</sup>
8. Jabir ibn 'Abdullah also narrated that the Messenger of God forbade killing animals in a drawn out manner.<sup>77</sup>



9. "Do not use anything which possesses a soul as target practice."<sup>78</sup>
10. "You most definitely should not slaughter milk-bearing animals."<sup>79</sup>
11. "God has prescribed doing everything in the best, most perfect, most beautiful manner. Therefore, when you execute someone, do it in the best manner; and when you sacrifice an animal, do it in the best manner. Sharpen your blades to prevent unnecessary pain."<sup>80</sup>

When you execute someone": i.e., in accordance with the *lex talionis* (legally for retribution). "Do it in the best manner": carry out the execution in the best manner by selecting the quickest and least painful method. "Sacrifice an animal": that is religiously sanctioned, and "do it in the best manner" by being gentle, and not violently killing the beast, or violently dragging it to the slaughterhouse, or killing another animal in front of it. "To prevent unnecessary pain": by giving it a last drink and handling the blade with a firm and steady hand to hasten its death.

Imam al-Nawawi commented that this hadith is from amongst the hadiths that comprehensively explain the principles of Islam. And God knows best.

12. Ibn 'Abbas narrated that a man laid a sheep on its side for slaughter, and proceeded to sharpen the blade in front of it. The Prophet said to him, "Are you trying to subject it to multiple deaths? Why didn't you sharpen your blade before laying the sheep on its side for slaughter?"<sup>81</sup>

### *Mercy Towards Birds*

1. The Messenger of God said, "If a sparrow is killed by someone without good reason, it will cry out to God on the Day of Judgment, 'Lord, this person killed me for no reason.'"<sup>82</sup>
2. It has been related from a companion of the Prophet that, "We were once with the Prophet when a man came by with his garment wrapped around something in his hand. He turned to the Prophet, 'Messenger of God, I saw you from a distance and started walking toward you. On my way, I passed by a thicket and heard chirping; I saw some chicks and put them in my garment. The mother then returned and started flying around my head. I showed her where her chicks were at which point she dropped in the cloth of my dress to be with them. I wrapped them up, and here they are with me.' The Prophet said, 'Let them go.' The man released them, but the chicks couldn't fly, and the mother refused to leave them. The Messenger of God then turned to his companions, 'Are you amazed by the mercy of this bird to her chicks?' 'Definitely!' He then said, 'I swear by God who has sent me with the truth, God is more merciful to His servants than this bird could ever be to her chicks. Bring the chicks back to where you found them along with their mother.'"<sup>83</sup>
3. 'Abdulla bin Mas'ud narrated, "We were once traveling with the Messenger of God when he went off to respond to the call of nature. While he was gone, we spotted a red sparrow with two chicks. We took them, whereupon their mother began to spread out her wings in agitation. When the Prophet returned, he asked, 'Who has distressed this bird by taking away her chicks? Return them to her.'"<sup>84</sup>

## (ENDNOTES)

- 1 'Abdurrahman al-Shizari: *Nihayat al-Rutba fi Talab al-Hisba*, p22, ed. Dr. al-Sayyid al-Baz al-'Urayni, Dar al-Thaqafa Beirut.
- 2 Ibid., p97.
- 3 Al-Tirmidhi (Kitab al-Manaqib – Bab fi Fadl Makka).
- 4 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Manaqib – Bab 'Alamat al-Nubuwwa).
- 5 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Maghazi – Bab Uhudun Yuhibbuna wa-Nuhibbuhu).
- 6 Al-Haithami: *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab al-Muhafaza 'ala l-Wudu'). He noted that, "Al-Tabarani narrated it in *al-Kabir*, but Ibn Lahi'a is in the chain of transmitters, and he is a weak transmitter."
- 7 Sahih Muslim (Kitab al-Salam – Bab Istihbab al-Ruqya min al-'Ayn wa l-Namla wa l-Huma wa l-Nazra).
- 8 Al-Nawawi: *Sharh Sahih Muslim*; Ibn Hajar: *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*.
- 9 Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (al-Khamis wa l-Sab'un – Bab fi Rahmat al-Saghir wa Tawqir al-Kabir).
- 10 Al-Tirmidhi (Kitab al-Birr wa l-Sila – Bab Rahmat al-Muslimin); Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Adab – Bab fi l-Rahma).
- 11 Al-Mubarakpuri: *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi bi-Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi*.
- 12 Ibn Battal: *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (Kitab al-Adab – Bab Rahmat al-Nas wa l-Baha'im). The hadith, "Those who do not show mercy will not in turn be shown mercy"; Ibn Hajar: *Fath al-Bari*, same hadith.



- 13 Al-Munawi: Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir.
- 14 Musnad Ahmad (Musnad 'Abdulla ibn 'Amr); al-Suyuti in al-Jami' al-Saghir; al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami' no. 897, and al-Silsalat al-Sahiha no. 897.
- 15 Al-Munawi: Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir.
- 16 Muslim (Kitab al-Birr wa l-Sila wa l-Adab – Bab Fadl al-Rifq).
- 17 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Zakat – Bab Ma Yajuz Fihi al-Masa'la).
- 18 Muslim (Kitab al-Iman – Bab Qawl al-Nabi “Man Ghashshana fa-Laysa Minna”).
- 19 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab Bad' al-Khalq – Bab Sifat al-Shams wa l-Qamar).
- 20 Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun, ed. Dr. 'Ali 'Abdul Wahid Wafi, Maktabat al-Usra 2006, 2/699.
- 21 Muslim (Kitab al-Jihad wa l-Sayr – Bab Ta'mir al-Imam al-Umara' 'ala l-Bu'uth wa Wasiyyatihi Iyyahum bi-Adab al-Ghazw wa Ghayriha).
- 22 This extended quote appears in Musnaf 'Abdur Razzaq 5/220, hadith no. 9430.
- 23 Al-Muwatta' (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab al-Nahy 'an Qatl al-Nisa' wa l-Wildan fi l-Ghazw).
- 24 Al-Bayhaqi: (Al-Tasi' wa l-Thalathun min Shu'ab al-Iman – Fasl fi Nasihat al-Wulat wa Wa'zihim).
- 25 Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Rahun – Bab al-Muslimun Shuraka' fi Thalath).
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Hiyal – Bab Ma Yukrahu min al-Ihtiyal fi l-Buyu').

- 28 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Musaqat – Bab Ithm Man Mana'a Ibn al-Sabil min al-Ma').
- 29 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Kharaj – Bab fi Ihya al-Mawat).
- 30 Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi: Kanz al-'Ummal (Kitab Ihya al-Mawat – Dhayl al-Iqta').
- 31 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Jihad wa l-Sayr – Haddathana Yahya bin Bukayr).
- 32 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Sayd – Bab fi Ittikhadh al-Kalb li l-Sayd wa Ghayrihi).
- 33 Al-Nawawi: Sharh Sahih Muslim (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab Hukm Wulugh al-Kalb).
- 34 Musnad Ahmad (Musnad 'Ali bin Abi Talib).
- 35 Sahih Muslim (Kitab al-Hajj – Bab al-Targhib fi Sukna l-Medina wa l-Sabr 'ala La'wa'iha).
- 36 Sunan Abi Dawud (Kitab al-Adab – Bab fi l-Tawadu').
- 37 Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Fitan – Bab al-Amr bi l-Ma'ruf wa l-Nahy 'an al-Munkar).
- 38 Muslim (Kitab al-Iman – Bab Bayan Tahrim Idha' al-Jar).
- 39 Muslim (Kitab al-Ashriba – Bab Ikram al-Dayf wa Fadl Itharihi).
- 40 Al-Bukhari: Al-Adab al-Mufrad (Bab Qar' al-Bab).
- 41 Al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Iman – Bab Min al-Iman an Yuhibb li'Akhihi ma Yuhibb li Nafsihi).
- 42 Muslim (Kitab al-Birr wa l-Sila wa l-Adab – Bab Fadl Izalat al-Adha 'an al-Tariq). Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Adab – Bab Imatat al-Adha 'an al-Tariq).

- 43 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab al-Mawadi‘ allati Naha al-Nabi Salla Allah ‘alayhi wa Sallama ‘an al-Bul fiha). And al-Hakim in his Mustadrak 1/296, no. 664. He mentioned, “This hadith is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim, who quoted it with the narration of Qutayba. He also had a reinforcing narration related by Muhammad bin Sirin with an authentic chain of transmission, although the wording is different and Muslim did not quote this in his book.”
- 44 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab al-Mawadi‘ allati Naha al-Nabi Salla Allah ‘alayhi wa Sallama ‘an al-Bul fiha).
- 45 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Tibb – Bab fi l-Rajul Yatadawa).
- 46 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Tibb – Bab Ma Yudhkaru fi l-Ta‘un).
- 47 Musnaf Ibn Abi Shayba (Kitab al-Salat – Fi Kans al-Masajid).
- 48 Muslim (Kitab al-Jana’iz – Bab al-Salat ‘ala l-Qabr).
- 49 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-At‘ima – Bab fi Ghasl al-Yad Qabla l-Ta‘am).
- 50 ‘Awn al-Ma‘bud Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud for the same hadith.
- 51 Muslim (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab Karahat Ghams al-Mutawaddi’ wa Ghayrihi Yadahu al-Mashkuk fi Najasatiha fi l-Ina’ Qabla Ghasliha Thalathan).
- 52 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Adhan – Bab Ma Ja’ fi l-Thawm al-Nayy wa l-Basal wa l-Kurrath).
- 53 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Sawm – Bab Siwak al-Ratb wa l-Yabis li l-Sa‘im).
- 54 Sahih al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Jumu‘a – Bab al-Siwak Yawm al-Jumu‘a).
- 55 Sunan Abi Dawud (Kitab al-Tarajjul – Bab fi Islah al-Sha‘r).
- 56 Muwatta’ Malik (Kitab al-Sha‘r – Bab Islah al-Sha‘r).



- 57 Muwatta' Malik (Kitab al-Sha'r – Bab Islah al-Sha'r).
- 58 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Libas – Bab fi Ghasl al-Thawb wa fi l-Khaliqan).
- 59 Muslim (Kitab al-Iman – Bab Tahrim al-Kibr wa Bayanuhu).
- 60 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Libas – Bab Ma Ja' fi Isbal al-Izar).
- 61 Muslim (Kitab al-Tahara – Bab al-Nahy 'an al-Bul fi l-Ma' al-Rakid).
- 62 Sahih al-Bukhari (Bab al-Ashriba – Bab Taghtiyat al-Ina').
- 63 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Ashriba – Bab fi l-Nafkh fi l-Sharab wa l-Tanaffus fih).
- 64 Sahih Muslim (Kitab al-Ashriba – Bab Karahat al-Tanaffus fi Nafs al-Ina' wa Istihbab al-Tanaffus Thalathan Kharij al-Ina').
- 65 Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Tahara wa Sunanihi – Bab Ma Ja' fi l-Qasd fi l-Wudu' wa Karahiyyat al-Ta'addi fih).
- 66 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Adab – Bab fi Qat' al-Sidr).
- 67 Muslim (Kitab al-Musaqat – Bab Fadl al-Ghars wa l-Zar').
- 68 Musnad Ahmad (Hadith "Man Shahid al-Nabi"), and al-Bayhaqi in (al-Thani wa l-'Ishrun Shu'ab al-Iman – Bab Man Nassaba Shajara fa Sabara 'ala Hifziha).
- 69 Musnad Ahmad (Musnad Anas bin Malik).
- 70 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab fi l-Wuquf 'ala l-Dabba).
- 71 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab Ma Yu'maru bihi min al-Qiyam 'ala l-Dawabb wa l-Baha'im).
- 72 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab fi Sur'at al-Sayr).

- 73 Al-Bukhari (Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya' –Bab Haddathana Abu l-Yaman).
- 74 Al-Bukhari (Kitab al-Adab – Bab Rahmat al-Nas wa l-Baha'im).
- 75 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab fi l-Tahrish bayn al-Baha'im).
- 76 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab fi Wasm al-Dawabb).
- 77 Muslim (Kitab al-Sayd wa l-Dhaba'ih – Bab al-Nahy 'an Sabr al-Baha'im).
- 78 Muslim (Kitab al-Sayd wa l-Dhaba'ih – Bab al-Nahy 'an Sabr al-Baha'im).
- 79 Sahih Muslim (Kitab al-Ashriba – Bab Jawaz Istitba'ih Ghayrahu ila Dar Man Yathiqu bi Ridahu bi Dhalika).
- 80 Muslim (Kitab al-Sayd wa l-Dhaba'ih – Bab al-Amr bi Ihsan al-Dhabh wa l-Qatl wa Tahdid al-Shafra).
- 81 Al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak (Kitab al-Adahi). He noted that, "This hadith is authentic according to the conditions of al-Bukhari, although he himself does not quote it." Al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami' no. 93.
- 82 Musnad Ahmad (Hadith al-Sharid bin Suwayd al-Thaqafi).
- 83 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jana'iz – Bab al-Amrad al-Mukaffira li l-Dhunub).
- 84 Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad – Bab fi Karahiyyat Harq al-'Aduww bi l-Nar).



# Environmentalism An Islamic Perspective

Ali Gomaa

